REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully requested.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-28 are currently pending in the application, with Claims 1, 15, 17 and 24 being the independent claims. Claims 17-28 have been withdrawn from consideration.

Section 102(b) Rejection

Claims 1, 2, 4-6, 15 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly anticipated by Kitamura et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0016249). Applicants note that Kitamura et al. is the U.S. counterpart of Japanese Patent Application Laid-Open No. 2001-341412, described as reference 2 on page 2 of the substitute specification for the present application. Applicants respectfully disagree with this rejection.

Before addressing the merits of the rejection, Applicants believe it will be helpful to review some features and advantages of the present invention. As noted in Claim 1, the present invention relates to a recording medium for ink including an ink receiving portion for receiving an ink and holding a coloring agent in the ink, comprising an increasing region. In the increasing region, a reactive substance capable of reacting with the coloring agent and holding the coloring agent is present with such a distribution as to increase in the direction of depth of the ink receiving portion. The increasing region is in a position apart from an outermost ink recording surface of the recording medium for ink. As recited in Claim 15, the present invention

also relates to a substrate for a recording medium for ink and for forming an ink receiving layer containing at least a pigment for holding a coloring agent of an ink and a binder for the pigment. The substrate comprises an increasing region, in which a reactive substance capable of reacting with the coloring agent and holding the coloring agent is present in such a distribution as to increase in the direction of depth, as viewed from the surface on which the ink receiving layer is to be formed.

In the present invention, an increasing region of a reactive substance is present in a position apart from an outermost ink recording surface. The claimed ink recording medium shows reduced image deterioration due to the dye displacement that tends to take place when the image is maintained under conditions of high humidity. The claimed ink recording medium also shows reduced image deterioration due to light when the image is displayed. Moreover, printed images on the claimed ink recording medium have excellent stability over time. (See page 43, last paragraph, of the substitute specification.) In Applicants' view, the cited reference does not teach or suggest the claimed invention.

Kitamura et al. discloses a recording material comprising a substrate and a recording stratum provided on the substrate. The recording stratum has a layered structure of one or a plurality of ink receiving layers, which contain specific pigment fine particles having an average particle size of 1 μm or less. The Examiner asserts that Kitamura et al. discloses that an inside ink receiving layer is formed on the substrate as well as an outermost ink receiving layer, citing paragraph [0117]; that the outermost ink receiving layer comprises a pigment which may be an alumina compound, citing paragraph [0118]; and that the substrate may be a paper sheet which may be coated with cationic resin, citing paragraph [0133].

Applicants note, however, that these optional features mentioned in paragraphs [0117], [0118] and [0133] are independent of each other. Moreover, Applicants note that Kitamura et al. also teaches that it is preferable that the coating liquid for the outermost layer contain a cationic compound, and that the coating liquid for the undercoat layer (recording stratum) contain a cationic compound (see paragraphs [0049], [0057], [0111], [0112], [0113], [0126]), although the present inventors recognize such features as being problematic. To be specific, when a coating liquid for forming an ink receiving layer contains a cationic substance, the effect of reduced image deterioration due to light when the image is displayed becomes noticeably inferior. (See page 13, lines 9-23 of the substitute specification.) Furthermore, when a coating liquid for forming the undercoat layer contains a cationic substance, depending on the amount of the cationic substance contained in the undercoat layer, crack formation in the outermost ink receiving layer or loss of surface gloss may be caused. (See page 13, lines 24-29 of the substitute specification.)

Applicants submit that Kitamura et al. does not teach or suggest the structure of the present invention: substrate subjected to a cationizing treatment/undercoat layer (corresponding to the inside layer of Kitamura et al.)/outermost layer. Accordingly, Applicants conclude that Kitamura et al. does not anticipate the present invention.

Applicants further submit that since Kitamura et al. does not recognize the technical problem to be solved by the present invention, a person skilled in the art could not selectively pick various elements usable in the present invention from among the features independently disclosed in Kitamura et al., and thereby arrive at the present invention.

Applicants therefore conclude that Kitamura et al. does not teach or suggest the features of the present invention, and respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Provisional Double Patenting Rejection

Claims 1-16 were provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as allegedly being unpatentable over Claims 1-26 of copending Application No. 10/664,872 in view of Kitamura et al. Since the cited claims are not yet patented, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be held in abeyance, and be reconsidered in view of Applicants' comments above regarding Kitamura et al.

Conclusion

Applicants further submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the above-noted rejections, rejoinder of withdrawn Claims 17-28, and issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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